

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-09 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12

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TAGS: TSPA, OVIP, XT

SUBJECT: NASA ADMINISTRATOR MEETING WITH ESRO OFFICIALS

1. SUMMARY: NASA ADMINISTRATOR DR. FLETCHER DESCRIBED TO ESRO OFFICIALS INCREASING IMPORTANCE USG PLACES ON SORTIE LAB PORTION OF SPACE SHUTTLE PROGRAM. HE UNDERLINED NECESSITY FOR EARLY FIRM COMMITMENT BY EUROPEANS. IT WAS GENERALLY AGREED THAT WEST GERMANY WOULD SOON BE FIRST SIGN AGREEMENT WITH ESRO, BUT ESRO OFFICIALS THOUGHT ITALY MIGHT TAKE LONGER. AGREEMENT BY THOSE TWO COUNTRIES WOULD COMMIT ESRO TO THE SORTIE MODULE PROJECT, ASSUMING COST ESTIMATES DUE IN AUGUST ARE NOT EXCESSIVE. SORTIE MODULE PROGRAM HEAD CAUSSE SAID THAT TIME FRAME FOR COST ESTIMATE STUDY REQUIRES BOTH FREEZE ON ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS FOR SCIENTIFIC PROJECTS AND FIRM KNOWLEDGE OF SPECIFICATIONS FOR SORTIE MODULE'S INTERFACE WITH SHUTTLE. ESRO OFFICIALS DO NOT BELIEVE THAT APPORTIONMENT OF CONTRACTS BY COUNTRY CONTRIBUTION WOULD EXCESSIVELY INCREASE THE SORTIE LAB COSTS. END SUMMARY.

2. NASA ADMINISTRATOR DR. JAMES C. FLETCHER, ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR
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FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS ARNOLD FRUTKIN, AND SCICON MET TODAY WITH THREE KEY ESRO OFFICIALS: COUNCIL CHAIRMAN MAURICE LEVY, NEWLY APPOINTED SORTIE LAB HEAD OF PROGRAM JEAN- PIERRE CAUSSE, AND ESRO ADMINISTRATOR ROY GIBSON. THE MEETING WAS DEVOTED EXCLUSIVELY TO EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENT OF SORTIE LAB MODULE FOR U. S. POST- APOLLO PROGRAM.

3. DR. FLETCHER SAID U. S. ATTACHES INCREASING IMPORTANCE TO THE SORTIE LAB BECAUSE IT WILL BE ONLY MANNED SCIENTIFIC PROJECT IN SPACE SHUTTLE PROGRAM. MORE IMPORTANTLY, NASA IS DISCOVERING INCREASING NUMBER OF VALUABLE SCIENTIFIC PROJECTS THAT MAY BE PERFORMED IN SORTIE LAB.

4. DR. FLETCHER STRESSED HOPE FOR FIRM EARLY COMMITMENT, AT LEAST BY GERMANY AND ITALY TO PREVENT PREJUDICE TO PROGRAM BY UNFORESEEN DEVELOPMENTS IN EUROPE OR U. S. THEIR AGREEMENT WOULD COMMIT ESRO TO THE PROJECT, DEPENDING OF COURSE ON OUTCOME OF COST ESTIMATE STUDY. GIBSON THOUGHT THAT WEST GERMANY WOULD SIGN IN A FEW DAYS, BUT BOTH HE AND LEVY THOUGHT ITALY MIGHT TAKE LONGER. LEVY EMPHASIZED NEED TO GET ITALIAN APPROVAL BEFORE POSSIBLE CHANGE IN THAT COUNTRY, S GOVERNMENT ON 25. FRANCE AND BELGIUM, LEVY ADDED, WOULD POSTPONE DECISION ON SORTIE LAB TO SEE HOW THE L3 S DISCUSSIONS TURN OUT. HE EXPECTED ALL ESRO COUNTRIES INVOLVED IN PROJECT TO AGREE BY JUNE.

5. REGARDING NASA' S DESIRE FOR AN EARLY WRITTEN COMMITMENT BY EUROPEAN NATIONS GIBSON SUGGESTED HAVING ESRO DIRECTOR GENERAL HOCKER SEND NASA LETTER COVERING TEXTS OF ESRO AGREEMENTS WITH THE GERMAN AND ITALIAN GOVERNMENTS AS SOON AS THEY ARE SIGNED. LETTER WOULD STATE ESRO COMMITMENT TO PROJECT.

6. IT WAS GENERALLY AGREED THAT AGENCY- TO- AGENCY AGREEMENTS BETWEEN EUROPEANS AND THE USG COULD BE INITIALED FOR MAY1.

7. BEYOND THESE QUESTIONS OF NATIONAL PARTICIPATION, ESRO FACES IMMEDIATE PROBLEM IN DETERMINING SORTIE LAB SPECIFICATIONS FOR THE COST STUDIES. CAUSSE SADI IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO FREEZE FURTHER ACCEPTANCE OF PROPOSALS FOR NEW SCIENTIFIC PROJECTS FOR SORTIE LAB UNTIL COST ANALYSES ARE COMPLETED. HE ALSO EMPHASIZED NEED FOR FIRM INTERFACE SPECIFICATIONS FROM NASA.

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8. ESRO OFFICIALS WERE SENSITIVE ON QUESTION OF COMPATABILITY OF AUTOMATED SCIENTIFIC EXPERIMENTS IN PILOT CONTROL MODE WITH SORTIE LAB EXPERIMENTS. THEY CLEARLY DID NOT WANT TO SEE LAB EXPERIMENTS BECOME OF SECONDARY IMPORTANCE.

9. FLETCHER ASKED ABOUT COST IMPACT OF ESRO REQUIREMENT FOR GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF INDUSTRIAL CONTRACTS AMONG MEMBER STATES. GIBSON CITED STUDIES SHOWING THIS REQUIREMENT RAISED COSTS OF OTHER ESRO PROGRAMS BY ONLY 5 PERCENT OR 6 PERCENT. HE EXPECTED THE PERCENTAGE TO BE EVEN LOWER FOR SORTIE MODULE BECAUSE PRIME CONTRACT AND HALF THE OTHER CONTRACTS WOULD GO TO WEST GERMANY.

10. THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED IN CORDIAL AND WORKMANLIKE ATMOSPHERE AND ENDED ON DECIDELY OPTIMISTIC TONE. KUBISCH

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